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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3766th meeting of the Security Council, held on 16 April 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Afghanistan of 16 March 1997 (S/1997/240). It has also considered the views expressed at its 3765th meeting on 14-15 April 1997 on the subject.

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the continued fighting in Afghanistan and its intensification in recent months. It reiterates that the continuation of the conflict threatens to destabilize the region and prevents steps towards the formation of a fully representative and broad-based government able to address effectively Afghanistan's acute social and economic problems.

"The Security Council calls upon the Afghan parties to cease immediately all hostile actions and to enter into sustained negotiations. The Council strongly believes that a negotiated settlement is the only solution to the long-standing conflict in this country.

"The Security Council fully supports the United Nations efforts to facilitate national reconciliation in Afghanistan. It is convinced that the United Nations must continue to play the central role in assisting the warring Afghan factions to engage in a fully-fledged negotiating process on the basis of Security Council resolution 1076 (1996) and General Assembly resolution 51/195. The Council welcomes the activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) and supports further efforts by the Secretary-General to give a new impetus to its work. In this context it welcomes the holding by UNSMA of intra-Afghan working group meetings in Islamabad but regrets that these efforts have not yet achieved positive results.

"The Security Council deeply regrets that many important provisions of Security Council resolution 1076 (1996) and General Assembly resolution 51/195 remain unimplemented. It calls upon all Afghan parties, in

particular the Taliban, to abide by these resolutions, to cooperate fully with UNSMA and to participate in serious and honest negotiations through the good offices of the Special Mission. The Council urges interested countries to coordinate their activities with those of UNSMA and to refrain from supporting one Afghan party against another.

"The Security Council welcomes the convening by the Secretary-General of a meeting of concerned countries on 16 April 1997, following the earlier meeting held in New York on 18 November 1996.

"The Security Council takes note of the intention of the Secretary-General to consult the Afghan parties and all those concerned on the advisability of an intra-Afghan meeting at some stage and requests him to put forward a concrete plan if and when he decides that it will contribute to the peace process.

"The Security Council again calls upon all States to end immediately the supply of arms and ammunition to all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan.

"The Security Council reiterates its concern that the continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan provides a fertile ground for terrorism and drug trafficking which destabilize the region and beyond, and calls upon the leaders of the Afghan parties to halt such activities.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned at the worsening of the humanitarian situation including the displacement of the civilian population. It is also deeply concerned at the discrimination against women and other violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan. The Council deplores the mistreatment of personnel of international humanitarian organizations, which inhibits the international community's ability to respond to Afghanistan's pressing humanitarian needs.

"The Security Council welcomes the convening of an International Forum on Assistance to Afghanistan on 21-22 January 1997 at Ashgabat and the forthcoming meeting of the Afghanistan Support Group on 21 April 1997 in Geneva. It encourages all States and international organizations to continue to extend all possible humanitarian assistance which should be distributed equitably throughout the country.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter and requests the Secretary-General to continue to keep it regularly informed of the situation in Afghanistan."

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